

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claimed invention is respectfully requested in view of the amendments, remarks and enclosures herewith, which place the application in condition for allowance.

I. STATUS OF CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-6 and 14-17 are now pending in this application. Claims 7-13 have been cancelled. With the cancellation of these claims, it is believed that claims 1-6 and 14-17 are in condition for allowance. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

It is submitted that the claims, herewith and as originally presented, are patentably distinct over the prior art cited in the Office Action, and that these claims were in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. The amendments of the claims, as presented herein, are not made for purposes of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §§§§ 101, 102, 103 or 112. Rather, these amendments and additions are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. THE OBJECTIONS TO THE CLAIMS HAVE BEEN OVERCOME

The objections to claims 7-13 have been overcome in light of the following amendments and/or arguments:

III. THE 35 U.S.C. 102(b) REJECTION HAS BEEN OVERCOME

Claims 7-13 were rejected as allegedly being anticipated by Gijutsu et al. (JP 11-323258 - "Gijutsu"). The applicants request reconsideration of this rejection for the following reasons.

While the applicants disagree with the holding of anticipation for claims 7-13, in order to expedite prosecution, claims 7-13 have been cancelled. The applicants reserve the right to further pursue claims 7-13 in a continuation application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks and amendments herewith, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application and prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited. The undersigned looks forward to hearing favorably from the Examiner at an early date, and, the Examiner is invited to telephonically contact the undersigned to advance prosecution. The Commission is authorized to charge any fee occasioned by this paper, or credit any overpayment of such fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,
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